

# LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



## **Statue of The Republic** **Jackson Park at Hayes and Richards Drs.**

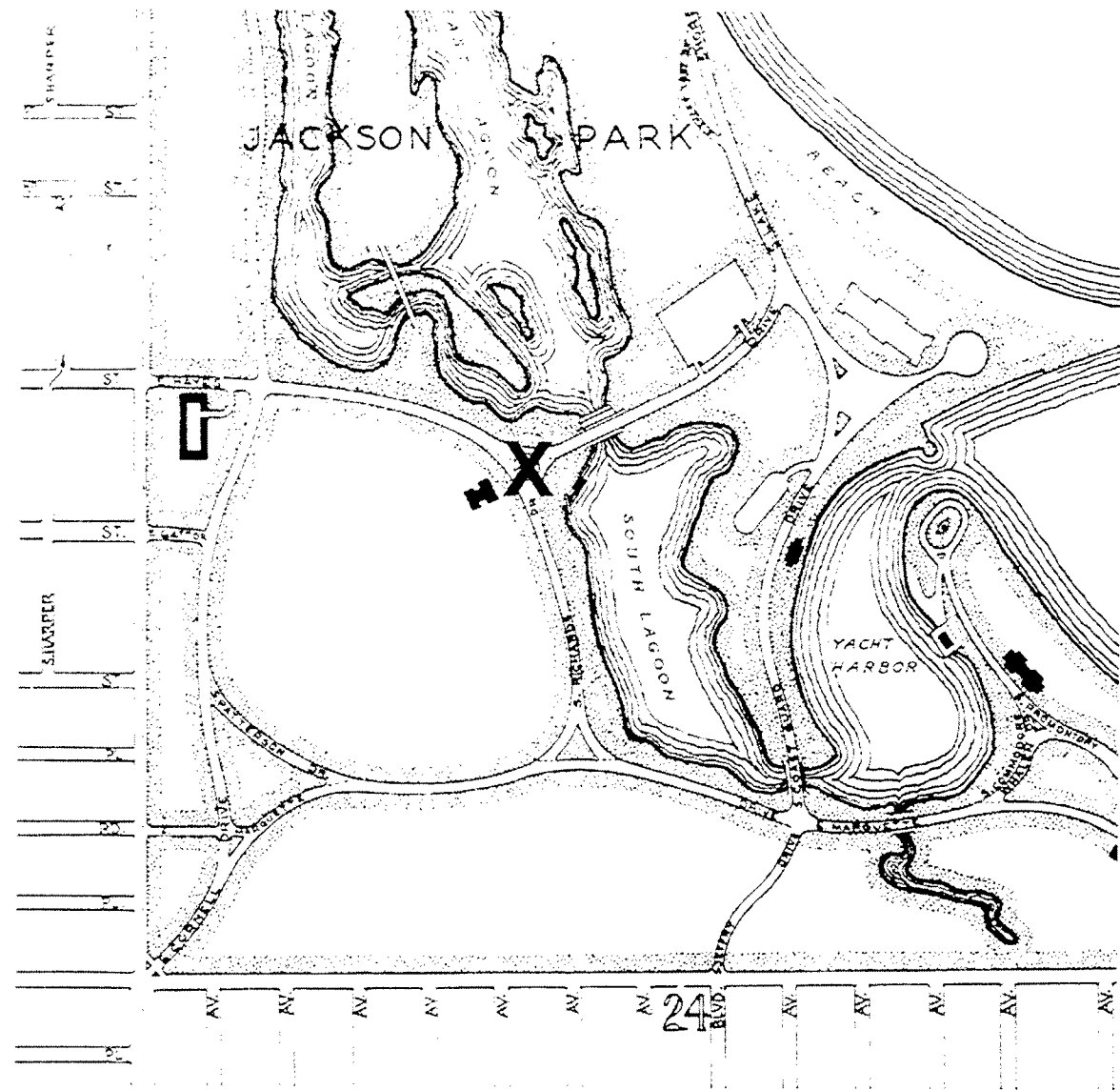
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**Preliminary Landmark recommendation approved by  
the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, December 5, 2002**



**CITY OF CHICAGO**  
**Richard M. Daley, Mayor**

**Department of Planning and Development**  
**Alicia Mazur Berg, Commissioner**



The Statue of *The Republic* (marked by an "X") is located in Jackson Park on Chicago's South-side lakefront.

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council which individual buildings, sites, objects, or districts should be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The landmark designation process begins with a staff study and a preliminary summary of information related to the potential designation criteria. The next step is a preliminary vote by the landmarks commission as to whether the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration. This vote not only initiates the formal designation process, but it places the review of city permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission until a final landmark recommendation is acted on by the City Council.

This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

## STATUE OF *THE REPUBLIC*

JACKSON PARK AT HAYES AND RICHARDS DRIVES

BUILT: 1918  
 SCULPTOR: DANIEL CHESTER FRENCH  
 ARCHITECT: HENRY BACON

The 24-foot-high monumental gilded bronze statue of *The Republic* in Jackson Park was dedicated on May 11, 1918, commemorating both the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago and the Illinois statehood centennial. The "Golden Lady," as she is affectionately known, is a one-third reproduction of the colossal 65-foot-high original, the "crowning feature of the fair" which stood prominently in the Grand Basin of the Court of Honor that was the central focus of the fairgrounds. The significance of the fair to the nation was profound and long lasting, and it was an event so central to Chicago's heritage that it was commemorated as one of the four stars on the city flag.

*The Republic* statue, meant to symbolize national unity, is one of the most acclaimed works of renowned sculptor Daniel Chester French. With architect Henry Bacon who designed the pedestal for the 1918 reproduction, French went on to complete his most famous sculpture, the seated statue of Abraham Lincoln for the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Along with Augustus Saint-Gaudens, French is considered to have been one of the most important American sculptors working in the classical tradition.

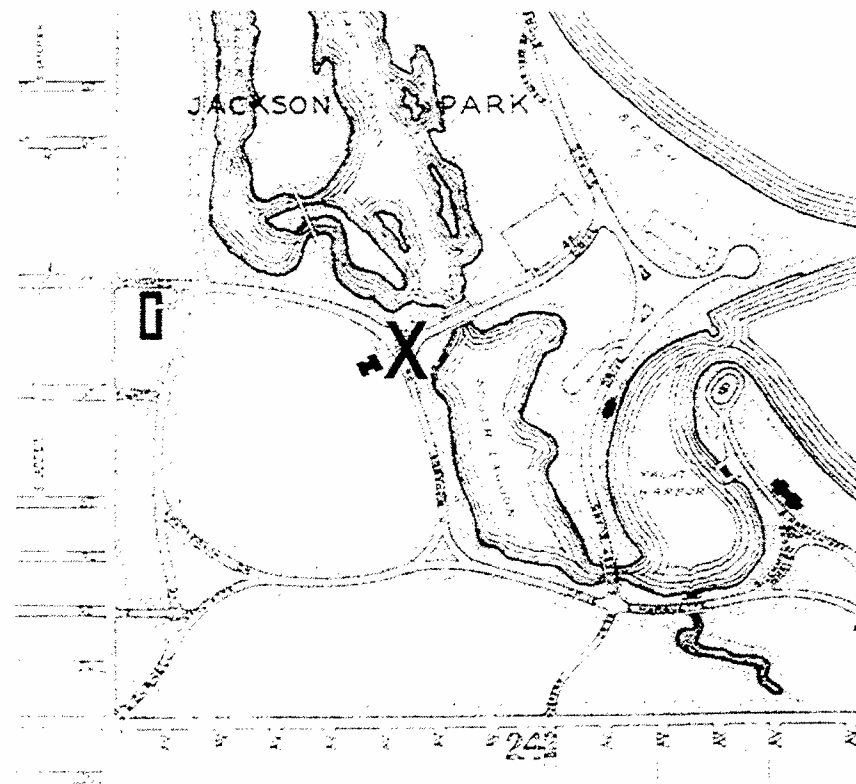
The fair's colossal statue, like virtually all of the buildings and sculpture at the fair, was constructed of plaster staff over a metal frame, not meant to be permanent, and was destroyed after the fair closed. The 1918 reproduction was cast from an original plaster model and stands on the site of the fair's Administration Building, at what was the opposite end of the Grand Basin from the original statue's location.

## HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

The 24-foot-high monumental gilded bronze statue of *The Republic* in Jackson Park was dedicated on May 11, 1918, commemorating both the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago and the Illinois statehood centennial. The "Golden Lady," as she is affectionately known, is a one-third reproduction of the colossal 65-foot-high original, the "crowning feature of the fair" which stood prominently in the Grand Basin of the Court of Honor that was the central focus of the fairgrounds.

The private corporation formed to build and manage the world's fair was not officially disbanded until 1915, and the directors donated the remaining \$48,000 in funds to the B. F. Ferguson Monument Fund of the Art Institute of Chicago for the erection of a statue to commemorate the fair. A reproduction of Daniel Chester French's statue of *The Republic* was selected for the commemoration, having been one of the fair's most famous symbols and regarded at the time to have been one of the finest pieces of sculpture in the nation.

The Ferguson Fund was established in 1905 to promote public sculpture in Chicago and has commissioned some of the City's most important public monuments, including Lorado Taft's *Fountain of Time*, the stone reliefs *Defense*, *Regeneration*, *The Pioneers*, and *The Discoverers* on the Michigan Avenue Bridge, the Illinois Centennial Memorial Column in Logan Square, *The Bowman* and *The Spearman* at Congress Plaza, and Henry Moore's *Nuclear Energy* on the University of Chicago campus and *Man Enters the Cosmos* at the Adler Planetarium. The Republic was the fund's second commission after Taft's 1913 *The Fountain of the Great Lakes*.



*The Republic* (marked with an "X") is located in Jackson Park at the intersection of Hayes and Richards Drives.



The Statue of *The Republic* was dedicated on May 11, 1918, commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago's Jackson Park in 1893.

Right: A photograph of the statue prior to the 1918 dedication ceremony. Below and bottom: Details of the statue and the granite pedestal.



The 12-foot-high plaster model for the original statue of *The Republic* had somehow survived after the fair ended, and the reproduction was cast using the original plaster model. French was given the commission in 1915, with the intention that the statue would be installed a year later. While French placed his signature on the statue with a date of 1916, delays principally in the casting pushed completion to February 1918. It arrived at the Englewood station on Chicago's South Side in March of that year and was installed during April to be unveiled on May 11<sup>th</sup> in a dedication ceremony attended by elected officials and other dignitaries. French later recalled that the statue cost about \$50,000, with \$10,000 for the bronze casting, \$1,200 for the gilding by the Gorham Company, and \$20,000 for the granite pedestal.

The pedestal, standing about 10 feet high, was designed by New York architect Henry Bacon of pink Stony Creek granite with a "rubbed" surface and features a series of Classical-style carved fasces and festoons. Inscriptions read "The Republic—to commemorate the World's Columbian Exposition MDCCCXCIII" and "The World's Columbian Exposition authorized by act of Congress and generously participated in by the nations of the Earth was held here in 1893 to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America. On this site stood the Administration Building." The pedestal is wrapped by a low bench and sits on an octagonal raised terrace.

*The Republic* depicts a woman in a classical breastplate and long flowing robe, with both hands outstretched above her head, one holding a globe with a hovering eagle above it, the other a staff. The globe and the eagle were the symbols chosen for the fair by the organizers, but the eagle as here depicted hovers over the globe. The staff for the fair's statue was a lance decorated with laurel leaves and a streamer and crowned by a Phrygian cap, a symbol of the French Revolution, but in the reproduction the lance has been replaced with a staff, topped by a laurel wreath. The statue was said to symbolize "both the republic of the United States, a single united political entity, and our republican form of government," while other interpretations have referred to it as an expression of the strength of the nation after the Civil War, the nation's assimilation of immigrants, or the desire that all nations of the world share the republican form of government and democratic principles of the United States.

The original statue was 65 feet high, for a total height including the base of over 100 feet. The concept for the statue and its central location at the fair were established by a design committee, with sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens advising the committee on the selection of artists and providing a concept sketch for the colossal statue in the vein of heroic statues of the ancient world and the then-contemporary work of Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, who a decade earlier had completed the *Statue of Liberty* (measuring 151 feet high). Saint-Gaudens selected French for the commission of what would be the undisputed focal point of the fairgrounds.

French's daughter Margaret later recalled that the statue,

of colossal proportions . . . was to be not only a big figure but a great one, one of the features of the Exposition, and, towering over her surroundings. Hence she must have straight, severe lines and the archaic austerity of her classic folds must be carefully thought out and reduced to their simplest principles, leading the eyes up to the arms and the head until they come to rest upon the calm, serious face. It was quite different from anything that [French] had done and he foresaw that there would be a division of opinion about it. Anyway, he believed it was not commonplace and he would rather have it cordially hated than endured. "We must get the essentials right," he said. "The reason a silhouette is a good likeness is because the essentials are right, even though all the details are left out."

The statue was modeled in clay and then cast in plaster, a process which took months to complete because of its enormous size, one of the largest sculptures in the world at the time and believed to be the largest ever made in America. French was given a section of the fair's Forestry Building for his studio, and he oversaw the process aided by two assistants, the sculptors Henry Augustus Lukeman and Andrew O'Connor. The original model was enlarged five times through a tedious mechanical process:

A group of workmen, experts in pointing and in plaster work, were assembled. . . . The finished plaster model was cut crosswise into sections and, by an accurate system of "pointing off," each section was enlarged five times, the model having been set up exactly one-fifth the proposed size of the finished statue. When the model was "pointed off," the corresponding points were located on the corresponding big section and marked by long nails driven into its ungainly skeleton from which they projected at all points like the quills of a porcupine. Each section was as large as a small house. . . . The sections were strengthened by having their joints wrapped with long jute fiber, dipping first in rather thin mortar. Then came the work of covering the frame with layer upon layer of staff. The finishing coat, finer and whiter than the rest, was done by [French] himself. When the scaffolding was taken down, these sections were taken out to the lagoon and hoisted into place, one on top of another, on the thirty-foot pedestal that had been built to receive them. The statue was strengthened by an interior framework of iron, and a little stairway of the same material ran up to the top of the head, principally for the use of the electrician who had charge of the circle of lights around the hair. Then she was covered with gold leaf from top to toe, with the exception of the head and arms which were left creme white [the 1918 reproduction is entirely gilded], and lo! an American goddess stood forth, with golden hair, clothed in shimmering draperies and by night a halo of stars around her head.

Any misgivings French may have had about how *The Republic* would be received were soon forgotten, as the statue was quickly acclaimed as one of the finest works by an American sculptor, as it was still so regarded at the time of the casting in 1918 of the commemorative reproduction. Speaking of the statue years later, Lorado Taft, himself one of America's great sculptors, recalled:

That crowning feature of the Fair was more than a big feature: it was a great one. Some did not like it, but that was their misfortune; it was not Mr. French's problem to make a merely pretty thing. . . . His the task to represent something more enduring than the exposition, and to embody it in a form which should enter into an architectural scheme of classic spirit. It was to be seen from a distance, in connection with those buildings; it must be a monument as well as a statue. . . . [It] is a remarkable achievement.

Constructed of plaster staff like virtually all the buildings and sculpture at the fair, *The Republic* was constructed to be sturdy enough to last a year exposed to the elements, but not to be permanent. After the fair closed, many of the buildings burned or were undone by the weather. The fairgrounds were later restored to a more naturalistic landscape in keeping with Frederick Law Olmsted's original plan for Jackson Park. The 1918 reproduction stands on the site of the fair's Administration Building, at what was the opposite end of the Grand Basin from the original statue's location. Along with the Museum of Science and Industry, a reconstruction (1929-33) of the plaster-and-staff Palace of Fine Arts, *The Republic* is all that remains of the fair.

## THE WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION OF 1893 AND THE "WHITE CITY"

The significance of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 was profound and long lasting. Not only did it demonstrate to the world American industry and innovation, it also illustrated the cultural, artistic, and architectural maturity of the nation, region and city. It was arguably the single-most important event in American architectural history due to its impact on American architecture, and it was an event so central to Chicago's heritage that it was commemorated as one of the four stars on the city flag.

Dedicated in 1892 and opened to the public in May 1893, the fair was created by people who sought to gain a place for Chicago among the great cities of the world. The enormity of their task and the high degree of success they achieved was magnified by the fact that the fair took place only 60 years after the city was founded, and just two decades after it was devastated by the Great Fire of 1871. In the six months that the fair was open, 21 million people attended.

From the time that Chicago was chosen as the host city for the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Columbus's landing in the "New World," the local organizers were determined that the Columbian Exposition would be a grand spectacle. These organizers included prominent businessman, politicians, professionals and organizations. In order to realize their concept of a great event in a spectacular setting, they were determined to attract the most talented American designers in all fields.

Preeminent among these was the founder of American landscape architecture, Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), who with his partner Calvert Vaux, had designed Chicago's South Side park system in 1871. Although many parts of his plan had been implemented in 1890, the south lakefront park known as Jackson Park was still undeveloped marshland. Olmsted, who was consulted during the fair's selection process, favored the Jackson Park site due to the potential for developing this part of his earlier plan.

The guiding force behind the planning and style of the fair was Daniel Burnham (1846-1912), principal of the Chicago architecture firm of D.H. Burnham & Company. The design committee he chaired included New York architects Charles McKim and Richard Morris Hunt, artists Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Louis Millet, and Olmsted, who was assigned to draft a new plan for the 686-acre site that would accommodate the immediate needs of the fair as well as the site's anticipated reuse as a public park.

Olmsted modified his 1871 plans for a park dominated by natural design elements, and worked with the architects to establish a contrast between the formal and natural. The main fairgrounds, excluding the entertainment area along the Midway Plaisance, were generally comprised of two distinct parts. A formal "Court of Honor" was located at the southern end of the fairgrounds, where most visitors arrived by rail or boat, while a more natural area was created at the northern end where the Palace of Fine Arts (now the Museum of Science and Industry) was to be located.

Arguably the fair's most important open space, the Court of Honor, was surrounded by the largest exposition buildings, which were designed in a unified classical style and were situated around an 1100-foot-long basin with fountains and monumental sculpture by some of the most prominent American architects, sculptors and artists of the day. Novelist Theodore Dreiser termed "its monumental stateliness and simple grandeur" as being unforgettable. It was the consistent use of classical formalism and the all-white color scheme of these buildings that inspired the nickname, the "White City."

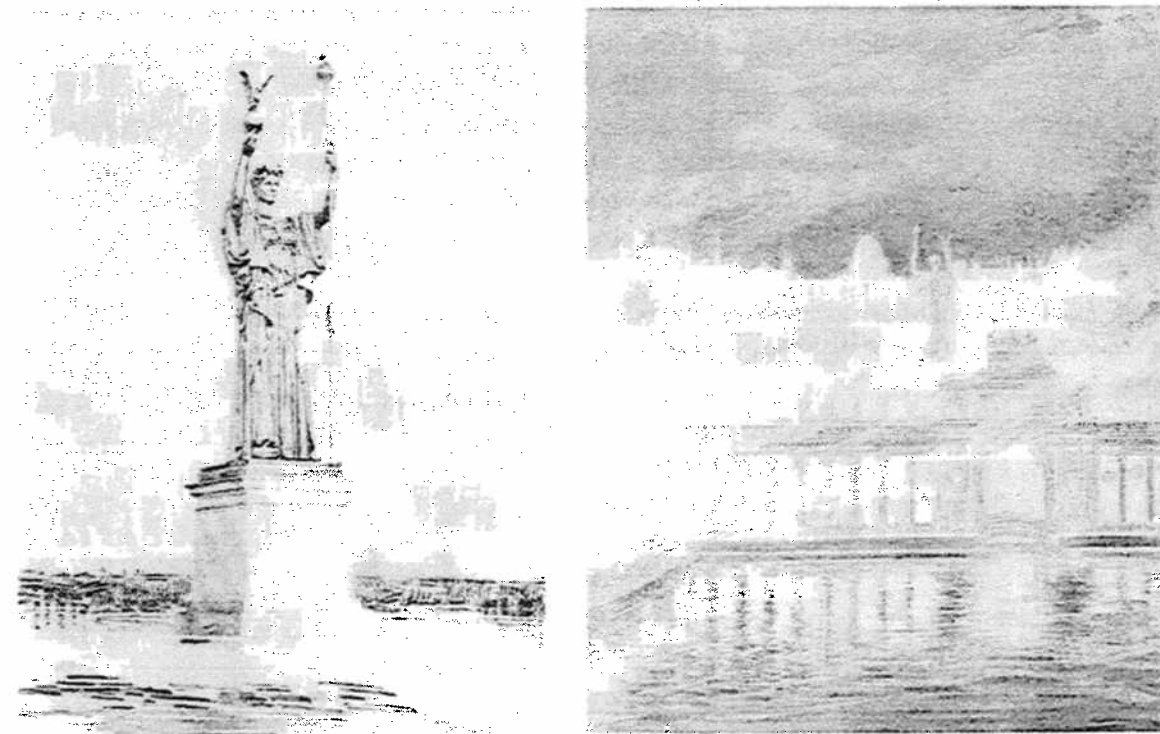
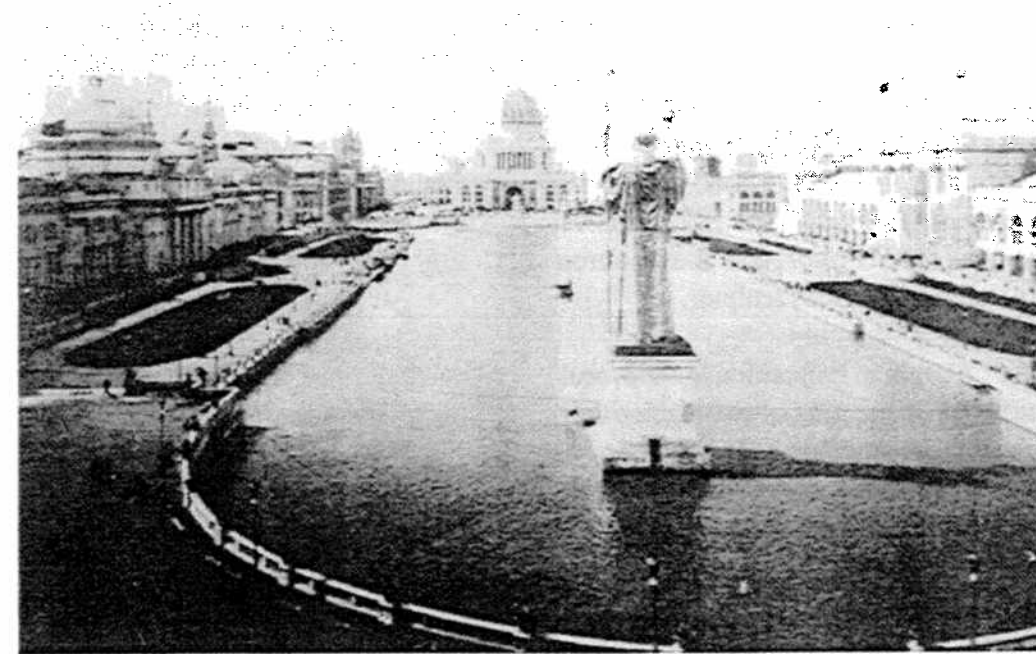
The unrivaled focal point of the Court of Honor was sculptor Daniel Chester French's colossal statue of *The Republic*, which stood prominently on a central pedestal at one end of the Grand Basin. Described by Lorado Taft as the "crowning feature of the fair," *The Republic* towered over the twelve exhibition halls and triumphal arch that surrounded the basin and expressed the classical themes and ideals of the fair.

The Columbian Exposition was the embodiment of the City Beautiful movement, and it is hard to underestimate the significance and lasting influence of the fair in terms of its impact on American architecture and culture. As historian Neil Harris has written,

The formative influence of the World's Columbian Exposition was undeniable. . . . Although the City Beautiful movement had origins older than the fair, and powerful contemporary influences came from the achievements of European cities, the White City continued to be a major presence in American city life. Many architects, landscape planners, sculptors, and painters involved with the exposition would, over the next twenty years, devote themselves to hundreds of municipal improvement projects, decorated buildings, city parks, enhanced waterfronts, ennobled railroad stations, widened streets and boulevards, museum buildings, and libraries. Likewise, fair promoters found themselves serving on the boards of museums of art and natural history, of zoos and orchestras, and of public improvement leagues and civic reform associations. Every time a great city plan was published—for Chicago or San Francisco or Cleveland or Denver—even by architects who were not directly involved with the Columbian Exposition, it was difficult to avoid some sense of resonance, even if indirect. In some of these plans, memories of the exposition were invoked as selling points, suggestions that the utopian visions being offered were neither impossible nor unprecedented, given the grand landscape achieved in Jackson Park. Individual structures—such as Union Station in Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania Station in New York, or the new Field Museum in Chicago—recalled the outlines and sometimes the details of the exposition. Locally, the association was especially strong, for Daniel Burnham's 1909 Chicago plan was promoted, in the teens, by a decade-long crusade that drew on the fair's glories.

Notes historian Robert W. Rydell, "the fair was a landmark event in American history. Its neoclassical White City reshaped the public architecture of the nation; its World's Congresses gathered intellectuals, labor leaders, and social reformers to debate significant political and philosophical issues of the age; and its Midway Plaisance bestowed the stamp of legitimacy on mass entertainment as a vital component of American culture."

While some later critics of the fair—most famously Louis Sullivan, with his oft-quoted remark, "The damage wrought by the World's Fair will last for half a century from its date, if not longer," written several decades later and not published until 1924—bemoaned its far-reaching influence on American architecture in terms of its reliance on historical references and the loss of the "structural honesty" and innovation that had characterized the early Chicago School of Architecture, there is no doubting the fair's lasting significance on Chicago and the nation.



**Top:** The "Golden Lady," as *The Republic* is affectionately known, is a one-third reproduction of the colossal 65-foot-high original, the "crowning feature of the fair" which stood prominently in the Grand Basin of the Court of Honor that was the central focus of the World's Columbian Exposition. **Bottom left:** The design of *The Republic* complemented the classical design of the fair's buildings and grounds. **Bottom right:** A rendering of the Court of Honor, including *The Republic*, showing many of the fair's buildings burning soon after the closing of the fair. Like other fair buildings, structures, and statues, the original statue had been constructed of plaster staff over a metal frame, not meant to be permanent, and although it survived the fire, it was soon destroyed.

## DANIEL CHESTER FRENCH AND HENRY BACON

**Daniel Chester French** (1850-1931) was born in Exeter, New Hampshire, and raised in Massachusetts. Largely self-taught, French briefly studied in Boston and New York, and later Italy and France. Of his early commissions, his most famous was his life-size bronze *Minute Man* erected in 1873 to much acclaim when he was only 23. Other early works included an 1879 marble bust of *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, an 1884 seated statue of *John Harvard*, and an 1888 bronze *Thomas Gallaudet*. His 1891 bronze memorial to sculptor Martin Milmore, *Angel of Death and the Sculptor*, was shown abroad to wide acclaim and established his reputation as a leading American sculptor.

For the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, having assembled the "greatest meeting of artists since the days of the Renaissance," selected French to be a major contributor to the fair, both in terms of his exhibited work as well as part of the team of artists and sculptors contributing to the fair's artistic program. French was given one of the most important commissions of the fair, the great statue of *The Republic* which was to be the centerpiece of the fairgrounds, and which further confirmed his reputation as one of the leading sculptors of his day. The present-day statue is a 1918 reproduction by French of the original.

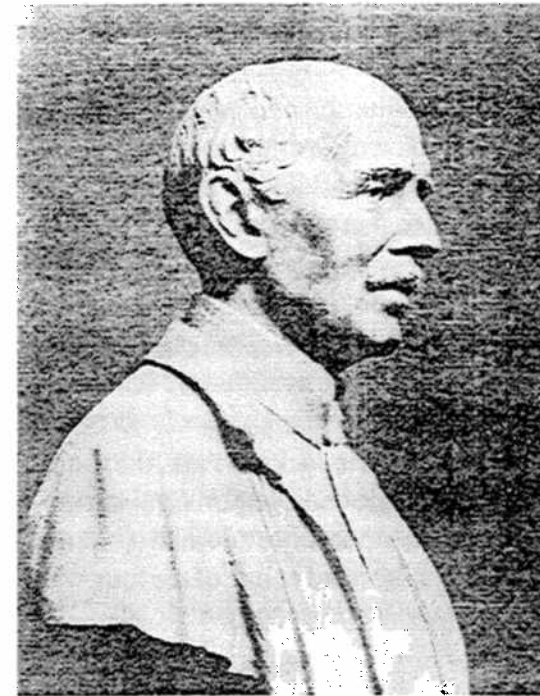
From his studio in New York and summer studio Chesterfield in Stockbridge, Massachusetts (now operated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation), he completed such works as the 1904 bronze doors at the Boston Public Library, *The Continents* at the U.S. Custom House in New York, and his most famous work and crowning achievement, the marble seated *Abraham Lincoln* for the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., dedicated in 1922. Along with Augustus Saint-Gaudens, French remains one of the most important of American sculptors working in the classical tradition.

French frequently collaborated with architects in designing settings for his sculpture, but for the Lincoln Memorial, New York architect **Henry Bacon (1866-1924)**, who had collaborated with French on several other pieces including the earlier 1918 reproduction of *The Republic*, selected French for what has become the most famous image of Abraham Lincoln and a national icon. In Chicago, French's other work includes *Memory: Marshall Field Monument* in Graceland Cemetery with architect Henry Bacon and the 1904 *George Washington Memorial* in Washington Park with architect Edward Clark Potter.

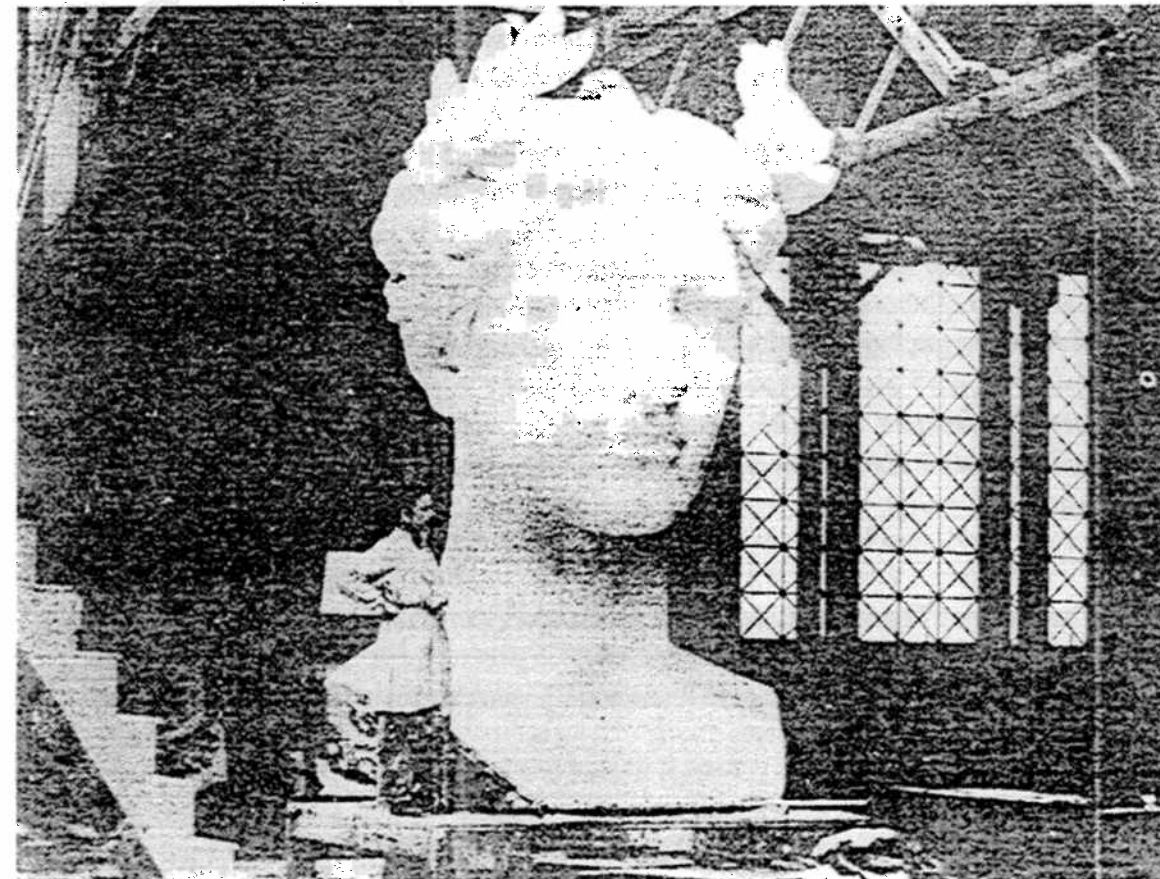
### CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect. 2-120-620 and -630), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a preliminary recommendation of landmark designation for a building, structure, object, work of art or district if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for landmark designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the statue of *The Republic* be designated as a Chicago Landmark.



Left: A bust (by his daughter Margaret) of sculptor Daniel Chester French. Bottom: French in his studio with the head portion of his colossal sculpture, *The Republic*.



### **Criterion 1: Critical Part of the City's History**

*Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois or the United States.*

- The statue of *The Republic* commemorates the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893, the influence of which was profound and long lasting—not only did it demonstrate to the world American industry and innovation, it also illustrated the cultural, artistic, and architectural maturity of the nation, region and city.

### **Criterion 2: Significant Historic Event**

*Its location as a site of a significant historic event which may or may not have taken place within or involved the use of any existing improvement.*

- Marking the site of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Jackson Park, the statue of *The Republic* commemorates what was arguably the single-most important event in American architectural history due to its impact on American architecture, and it was an event so central to Chicago's heritage that it was commemorated as one of the four stars on the city flag.

### **Criterion 5: Important Architect**

*Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois or the United States.*

- *The Republic* displays the talents of two nationally important American designers, sculptor Daniel Chester French and architect Henry Bacon. The bronze statue is one of the most important works (and one uniquely associated with Chicago) of Daniel Chester French, one of America's most celebrated and significant sculptors. Architect Henry Bacon, in collaboration with French, went on to complete one of the most iconic pieces of American architecture, the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

### **Criterion 7: Unique Visual Feature**

*Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Chicago.*

- The statue of *The Republic* has been an established visual feature of Jackson Park since its completion in 1918. The "Golden Lady," as she is affectionately known, remains today one of the most prominent features of the park and one of the most familiar pieces of public sculpture in the city.

### **Integrity Criteria**

*The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architectural or aesthetic interest or value.*

The statue of *The Republic* has excellent integrity, unaltered from its original 1918 appearance. The statue was regilded by the Chicago Park District in 1992.

### **SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES**

Whenever a building, structure, object, work of art or district is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the "significant historical and architectural features" of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based on its evaluation of the statue of *The Republic*, the Commission staff recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- the statue, pedestal and base in their entirety.

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A historic postcard view of *The Republic*.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### CITY OF CHICAGO

Richard M. Daley, Mayor

### Department of Planning and Development

Alicia Mazur Berg, Commissioner

Brian Goeken, Deputy Commissioner for Landmarks

### Project Staff

Terry Tatum, research and layout

Brian Goeken, writing and editing

### Other sources

Timothy Wittman, writing (portions from "World's Columbian Exposition" excerpted from  
 Museum of Science and Industry designation report for the Commission on Chicago  
 Landmarks)

### Illustrations

Department of Planning and Development: pp. 3, 4 (top left & bottom).

From *Chicago Tribune*, April 19, 1918: p. 4 (top right).

From *Grand Illusions*: p. 9.

From *The Life of Daniel Chester French*: p. 11.

B. F. Ferguson Fund Archives, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, The Art Institute of Chicago:  
 p. 14.

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 Chicago Department of Planning and Development, 33 N. LaSalle St., Room 1600,  
 Chicago, IL 60602; (312-744-3200) phone; (312-744-2958) TTY; (312-744-9140) fax; web  
 site, <http://www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks>*

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## **COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS**

David Mosena, Chairman  
Larry W. Parkman, Vice Chairman  
John W. Baird, Secretary  
Alicia Mazur Berg  
Lisa Willis-Brown  
Phyllis Ellin  
Michelle R. Obama  
Seymour Persky  
Ben Weese

The Commission is staffed by the  
Chicago Department of Planning and Development  
33 N. LaSalle Street, Suite 1600, Chicago, IL 60602

312-744-3200; 744-2958 (TTY)  
<http://www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks>

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